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British Spy Maclean Said to Die in Moscow

LONDON, March 10 (AP)—Donald Maclean, the British diplomat who spied for the Soviet Union and fled to Moscow in 1951, died today in a hospital in the Soviet capital, according to a British Broadcast Corp. report and other officially unconfirmed reports here.

[United Press International attributed the report to Soviet sources, and Reuter said the former spy's death was confirmed by a friend of the family.]

The BBC report said Maclean, 69, was believed to be suffering from cancer and recently was treated for pneumonia. It said Maclean recently spent six weeks in a Moscow clinic.

Maclean belonged to a ring of Cambridge-educated intellectuals and Communist sympathizers whose treachery has long echoed through Britain's scandal-plagued security services.

Maclean and two fellow spies, Guy Burgess and Kim Philby, had access to American secrets through their Foreign Office assignments and are believed to have transmitted information to the Soviet Union about U.S. nuclear weapons at a time the United States was far ahead in the weapons technology.

Maclean and his close friend Guy Burgess, tipped off by fellow spy Kim Philby that the net was closing in, slipped out of England on a ferry boat for France—and eventually Moscow—on May 25, 1951, Maclean's 38th birthday.

At the time he was head of the American desk at the Foreign Office in London. He served in Washington from 1944 to 1948 as first secretary at the British Embassy and then as joint secretary of the U.S.-British Combined Policy Committee on Atomic Development, dealing with the crucial issue of atomic weaponry.

The son of an upper-class family, Maclean's interest in Marxism as a student at Cambridge University in the 1930s crystallized into dedication.

Maclean, Burgess, who died in Moscow in 1963, Philby, who defected there in 1963, and Anthony Blunt, who began to collaborate with authorities in 1964 but was publicly unmasked only in 1979, were all at Cambridge in the 1930s and belonged to the secretive "Apostles" society at the university.

Maclean joined the Foreign Office at the age of 22 after earning a Cambridge degree in Modern Languages and won steady promotion.